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ABSTRACT

This study skills workshop guide, for the college level, is designed to help students assess their study skills and personal behavior goals for becoming academically effective and confident. Seven consecutive, 2-hour, weekly sessions emphasize learning as an active process and concentrate on specific skills: objectives and goals; time management; taking lecture notes; reading a textbook; test taking strategies; managing test anxiety; and adapting to the college experience. Each session's content is outlined and homework assignments are given to encourage students to practice the workshop skills, culminating in ongoing refinement of personal goals and objectives. (BL)

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ORGANIZING A STUDY SKILLS WORKSHOP

By Myrna Feller and Ruth Hussey

The Pennsylvania State University

1983 APGA Convention

Washington, D.C.

March 22, 1983

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Rationale

Study involves the acquiring of information that can be retained and later recalled. To study one needs skills which are learned or developed abilities. Study skills prepare the student to acquire knowledge and competence through a planned process.

A student of any age may be ill prepared for the academic demands of college, thinking that he or she has the appropriate study skills. Often the student does not appraise his or her own study skills so that deficiencies may be targeted and improved. Conversely, many adult students are frighten to begin college because they feel inadequately prepared. The student is frequently overwhelmed by the amount of work required and the time span available to accomplish these tasks. The student who does not develop study skills may find the college experience a haphazard potpouri of events rather than a learned process.

This workshop is designed to enable a student to assess the skills necessary to formulate his or her own personal behavioral goals for increasing academic effectiveness. Good study skills require practice, commitment, and careful planning.

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Introduction

The workshop is designed to assist the student in acquiring the study skills necessary to become academically effective and confident. Seven sessions are presented that emphasize learning as an active process and concentrate on the skills that students often lack upon entering college.

Objectives and Goals
Time Management
Taking Lecture Notes
Reading a Textbook
Test Taking Strategies
Managing Test Anxiety
Adapting to the College Experience

The format is a two-hour session on each topic once a week for seven consecutive weeks. Homework assignments after each session encourage students to practice the skills taught, culminating in an ongoing refinement of the process of setting and clarifying objectives and goals. The desired result is a positive approach to study and early negation of self-defeating attitudes.

SESSION ONE

OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

I. Introduction of workshop leaders and participants (Use an ice breaking exercise or role play situation)

II. Discuss goals of the workshop
   A. Assess study habits and academic skills
   B. Set goals for improving academic effectiveness
   C. Learn skills to improve academic effectiveness

III. Establish group norms
   A. Sensitivity to others in group
   B. Personal commitment
   C. Confidentiality
   D. Other rules which the group would like to establish

IV. Have participants complete a study skills inventory

V. Discuss rationale for setting goals
   A. Focuses attention on learning new behaviors
   B. Helps to sustain effort by making a commitment
   C. Sets expectations to achieve

VI. Participation in exercise to increase memory through organization

VII. Explanation of a daily schedule: How I Spend My Day

HOMEWORK

1. Complete Goal Setting exercise
2. Complete How I Spend My Day

SESSION TWO

TIME MANAGEMENT

I. Discuss results of homework assignments

A. Goal Setting
1. Discussion of long term and short term goals
2. Encourage feedback on personal insights and obstacles

B. Daily Schedule: How I Spend My Day
1. Explore individual differences of time management through record keeping
2. Promote insights into careful use of time

II. Rationale for schedule planning

A. Sets priorities

B. Promotes efficiency

C. Allows flexibility

III. Devise a weekly schedule

A. Fill in all fixed events

B. Add life support activities

C. Block in study time

D. Identify leisure time

IV. Tips for a study schedule

A. Time commitment for each course

B. Set realistic goals for each study session

C. Allow for periodic study breaks

D. Do most difficult tasks when most alert

E. Take advantage of short intervals of time

F. Effective use of time is more valuable than more time

V. Preplan a daily list of things to accomplish

A. Study assignments

B. Tasks and commitments

HOMEWORK

1. Prepare own Weekly Schedule

SESSION THREE

TAKING LECTURE NOTES

I. Review Homework: Discuss experiences with weekly schedules by asking the members to complete an exercise using stem questions to promote group discussion

II. Goal Clarification: Participants are handed copies of the following questions to discuss in pairs with 10 minutes given for each person to respond:

A. What are your career goals for the next year?

B. How might your personal life change if you reached these goals?

C. What is the next step for you to take in reaching these goals?

D. What is it that you are most afraid of doing in order to reach these goals?

III. Introduction to taking lecture notes

A. Why take lecture notes

B. Participants practice notetaking on a lecture covering notetaking technique

C. Cornell notes on the same lecture are then given the participants for comparison

D. Discussion of note taking methods
1. Cornell
2. Outlining
3. Préci's

HOMEWORK

1. Complete a second weekly schedule to improve time management skills

SESSION FOUR

READING A TEXTBOOK

I. Discuss second attempt at planning a weekly schedule
   A. Differences from first to second week
   B. Feelings of flexibility and control

II. SQ3R Study Method
   A. Survey
   B. Question
   C. Read
   D. Recite
   E. Review

III. Marking Your Textbook
   A. Underlining
   B. Highlighting

IV. Apply SQ3R and underlining to a selected reading

HOMEWORK

1. Exercise on surveying a textbook and a chapter
2. Continue work on weekly schedules

SESSION FIVE

TEST TAKING STRATEGIES

I. Have participants do the Rolling Aptitude Test to exemplify following directions

II. Homework: Review surveying a textbook

III. Exercise on SQ3R method

IV. Discuss three ways of learning
- A. Rote
- B. Recognition
- C. Relationship

V. Test Preparation
- A. Frequent and planful study
- B. Adequate rest and diet
- C. Block out distractions

VI. Hints for taking tests
- A. Taking an objective examination
- B. Taking an essay examination

VII. Discuss Test Wiseness
- A. Read instructions carefully
- B. Scan entire test
- C. Answer questions you know first
- D. Know the scoring procedure

VIII. Learning from an examination
- A. Find out what you missed
- B. Find out why you missed it
- C. Learn to avoid these errors on the next exam

HOMEWORK

1. Study notes from mini lecture and handouts for preparation of an examination next week

SESSION SIX

MANAGING TEST ANXIETY

I. Sources of fear causing anxiety
   A. How others will view you
   B. Your own self image
   C. Future security
   D. Not being prepared

II. Managing Test Anxiety
   A. Challenging negative self-statements (RET)
   B. Breathing techniques
   C. Progressive relaxation
   D. Thought stopping technique

III. In class practice exercises
   A. Deep breathing
   B. Progressive relaxation
   C. In-vivo desensitization for test anxiety reduction

IV. Participants complete objective exam on material from previous sessions

HOMEWORK

1. Practice self-relaxation

SESSION SEVEN

ADAPTING TO THE COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

I. Discuss effective study behavior
   A. Importance of exercise, sleep and diet
   B. Proper study area and time
   C. Improving concentration
II. Tour of library facilities
III. Provide information and referral of campus resources
IV. Discuss policies and procedures of the University
V. Complete evaluation of the workshop

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